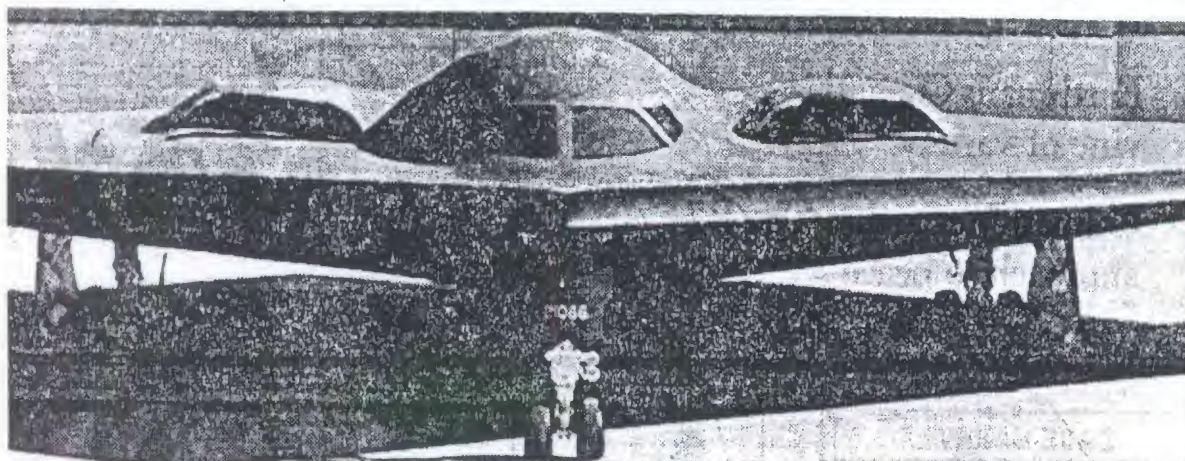


Post 12/4/88

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The Stealth bomber in Palmdale, Calif.

## The Wing, and the Prayer for Peace

**D**iffering U.S. foreign policies for creating peace were on display Nov. 22. In Palmdale, Calif., the B2 Stealth bomber had a coming-out party at which generals, politicians and 2,200 Northrop Corp. workers cheered the \$500 million warplane. Across the country in Washington, an equal number of citizens—returned Peace Corps volunteers and their friends—gathered for a liturgy to honor the memory of John Kennedy, the president who began the Peace Corps.

In Palmdale, the vision was peace through the power of military violence. In St. Matthew's, a cathedral named after the writer of the gospel in which peacemakers are blessed as children of God, the vision was of peace through the nonviolent power of service.

In Palmdale, Air Force Secretary Edward C. Aldridge Jr. said reverentially that it was "America's enduring hope and prayer that this magnificent aircraft will never fly in anger." With the expectation that money shovelers in Congress will continue to dig deep, a fleet of 132 Stealth bombers at a cost of \$60 billion to \$70 billion is projected.

In St. Matthew's, former Peace Corps volunteers also had an enduring hope and prayer: that in the next 27 years at least another 135,000 Americans—the number who have served to date—will go abroad.

At both sites, people of sincerity believed that their form of force is more effective in creating peace. Which group holds the truth? The two methods of achieving peace are diametrically opposite. Both can't be right. The Air Force says scare our enemies into peace

by threatening them with B2-delivered annihilation. Peace Corps volunteers say go abroad with books, seeds, medicine, ideas and ideals.

One difficulty in getting near the truth is that the failures of the military rarely count against it, while the successes of the Peace Corps rarely count for it.

Five days before the B2 bomber was rolled out of its Northrop hangar to cheers and speeches, a \$280 million B1 bomber crashed and exploded on impact at a South Dakota air base. The week before, another B1 bomber went down in Texas. A broken fuel line caused the crash. A third B1 didn't make it in September 1987, when a pelican smashed into the plane.

The three crashes cost \$840 million, a sum six times greater than the Peace Corps budget for one year. No Air Force official apologized to the public for the enormous waste of money. Instead, it was on to the air show at Palmdale. If the \$280 million B1 doesn't work, haul out the \$500 million B2, the most expensive weapon in U.S. history. For all the public knows, a B3 is flying high in the dreams of some weapons planner awaiting his first R&D outlay.

Militarists have convinced much of the public, and at times nearly all of Congress, that the next weapon, however more expensive or inefficient, will secure peace. In the 1880s, the automatic machine gun was introduced into the U.S. arsenal with the same language of deterrence heard at Palmdale: This weapon has such killing power that no enemy will dare fight us. Peace is at hand.

Since 1888, the machine gun and a

large supply of other weapons of equal peacekeeping promise have been carried by U.S. troops sent to fight Koreans, Haitians, Argentinians, Chileans, Nicaraguans, Chinese, Hondurans, Santo Domingans, Lebanese, Moroccans, Turks, Mexicans, Germans, Russians, Japanese, Guatemalans, Dutch Guianans, Cubans, Laotians, Cambodians and Vietnamese.

To date, the obvious question, asked a few years ago by Dick Gregory, remains unanswered: "If democracy is so good why do we have to go to other countries and try to jam it down their throats with a gun? Stay here and make democracy work. If it's good you don't have to force it on others, they'll steal it."

Few of the returned Peace Corps volunteers at St. Matthew's would have argued with that. They, and the 135,000 others who have served, made commitments to a belief that Sargent Shriver, the program's first director, expressed: "In the end it will be the servants who save us all." He meant that "we can begin to liberate (the less developed world) by making economic development and mutual service the hard core of our foreign policy and our defense policy."

What if the Peace Corps were given the \$70 billion in Stealth bomber money and volunteers sent to the Soviet Union? What if mutual assured destruction was replaced by mutual assured service? An answer may be found in history. In 1802, when the Treaty of Amiens was signed and the news brought to the French, Napoleon Bonaparte declared: "What a beautiful fix we are in now, peace has been declared."